

The Old Paths

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"Keep It Simple"

Jarrod Jacobs

The above statement is the "mantra" of a friend of mine. When it comes to the preaching and teaching of God's word, he has told me often, "Keep it simple." This sentiment was impressed upon my mind even further when a sister in Christ told me, "The main problem that high school students have today is not which church to go to, but whether or not to believe in God in the first place." Think about it: This lady has observed that we live in a society that has so pushed God aside that she said she knows high school students who need to be convinced about the very existence of God! A few generations ago, such a thought would be ridiculous; now it is reality!

The sister's observation told me that, yes, my friend is right in saying, "keep it simple" as I preach. Her observation also tells me that I need to be preaching and teaching these "simple" sermons not only to the teenagers, but also to the PARENTS of those teenagers! After all, children are the students of their parents. Therefore, if parents are not exposed to God, the Bible, to truth, etc., then how can we expect their children to know these things? God has placed the responsibility of teaching children with parents (Gen. 18:19; Deut. 6:6-9, 11:18-21; Eph. 6:4; II Tim. 1:5; etc.)! Parents, how are we

doing in this area of our lives? Are we spending the time teaching, or are we merely *assuming* that our children know the truth that we have learned?

Furthermore, when I think about the statement, "Keep it simple," I find that this is not an encouragement to make things simplistic, or speak down to people. Rather, it places responsibility on the teacher to make sure things are said in such a way that all those listening can understand. Brethren have said for many years that one does not need to be a "Greek scholar" to go to Heaven. This is true. In like manner, we do not need to have Ph.D.'s in order to understand the Bible! The apostle Paul said, "*Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ*" (Eph. 3:4). Jesus encouraged the reading and searching (studying) of Scriptures, for He knew that by so doing, mankind can understand the truth and can follow it (Jn. 5:39, 17:17; Rev. 1:3). Not only did He state this truth to others, but He lived it, Himself (Acts 1:1)! How are we doing with the reading and study of the Scriptures? How are we doing at living what we have learned?

Bear in mind, that when Jesus spoke, "*the common people heard him gladly*" (Mk. 12:37). Those who listened to Jesus were often the "unknowns," the "rejected," "the general population," or the "throng" (ESV). In contrast, the social "elites," and their ilk did not

like Jesus. In fact, they conspired against Him to keep Him from preaching. Their conclusion was that Christ needed to die (Jn. 11:47-53)! After Christ's death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, the apostles continued preaching His simple message to the "common" folks all over the world (Acts 1:8, ch. 2, etc.). When they preached that simple message, the "elites," and "educated" people marveled, at their words, noting, "*...they had been with Jesus*" (Acts 4:13).

Therefore, to "keep it simple" means to preach like Jesus and the apostles did. Can we think of any better examples to follow than Christ and His apostles when one today wants to communicate God's will in the best way? I can't! When we determine to preach and teach as Christ, then we will "keep it simple" for all people who are searching for the truth. Let no man get so caught up in his own ability and talents that he forgets to "hide behind the cross" when preaching! Keep it simple so that the "common people" can hear the truth, believe it, and obey it! Start at home! Keep it simple!

Facts Do Not Cease To Exist Just Because They Are Ignored!

Aldous Huxley, "*Proper Studies*", 1927
English critic & novelist (1894 - 1963)

A Thought Worth Thinking

Solomon said, "*Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.*"

(Prov. 26:20)

Question: Are YOU "wood"?

"Saved By The Blood"

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Recently I donated blood at the local blood center, as is often my practice. After the donation was complete, I began to think of the parallels of that practice and the blood of CHRIST. Don't get me wrong here, I am in no way trying to say that my blood can in any way save a person from hell. Only Christ's blood can save the soul. However, it can and does save lives. With the same commitment to the souls of men, I can assist in the saving of souls just as did the apostles. We can, as Christians, become fishers of men (Mark 1:17 - *"And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men"*). In this week's lesson let us explore this parallel.

GOD in his wisdom often places in the physical world types of the things that only exist in the spiritual realm. We can see this in the nation of Israel and it's relation to the spiritual Kingdom of God today (Romans 15:4 - *"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope"*). The same is evident in the sacrifices of old and the sacrifice of Christ (Hebrews 10:1 - *"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect"*). In the case at hand, we can give our blood to save the physical lives of several people. This requires a concern for others and a willingness to sacrifice for their benefit by the donor. Added

to these facts are the necessity of having someone who is willing to supply that donated blood to those who are in need and the acceptance of the recipient in order for the desired out come to take place.

If we look at this situation, we can see parallels with the spiritual realm. Christ had the concern and willingness to sacrifice his blood for us that our souls might be saved (Romans 5:8 - *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"*). Even with this great sacrifice for the souls of man, more is required. Someone must provide access to that blood by telling others of its existence and power (Mark 16:15 - *"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"*). Finally, the lost must accept the blood. We cannot force them to do the right thing, nor can we accept the blood for them (Hebrews 5:9 - *"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him"*). Just as with blood donation, only when all the requirements come together can the saving of all men occur. In this case, it is their souls that are saved and perhaps their bodies. Whereas with physical blood donation, only the bodies of a few men are saved and the soul is left unaffected.

As I contemplated this parallel, I began to wonder if we are truly as committed to saving souls, as we are lives. When you drive down the street, you will see yard signs and billboards encouraging us to donate blood. The blood center often calls people at home to provide needed blood. Donors often wear shirts indicating the need for blood donation. This begs the question to us Christians; are we doing the same with Christ's blood? Why is it that our society is so concerned with saving the temporal lives of man's bodies, but has little concern for the eternal fate of his soul? In fact, there are those who try to prevent us from displaying Christian messages publicly. As Christians, we need to be advertising the need for the saving power of the blood of Christ. This requires a life that exemplifies a Christian and a willingness to tell others how we were saved; just as a blood donor wears a shirt from the blood center. The church can only do so much in the spread of the gospel, the rest comes down to us individuals to take up our cross and follow him (Matthew 16:24 - *"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me"*). Let's do some good advertising in the coming days of our lives if we are so blessed by GOD.

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I want the truth, give me book, chapter, and verse!

Come and meet with the church of Christ in Caneyville.

Location: 101 N. Main Street Caneyville, KY

Meeting Times:

Sunday Bible Study	_____	10:00 a.m.
Sunday Worship	_____	10:45 a.m.
Sunday Worship	_____	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study	_____	7:00 p.m.

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"The Ancient Landmark" Radio program airs on WXMZ, 106.3 FM, Mon-Fri,
1:00-1:30 pm. It is also broadcast on www.thez.voyagetechnology.com

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